2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir AV1

sible to keep my eyes on the road and away from the magnificent views as we climbed up through blue and grey cedars, tall firs and straight pines, the ground strewn with their cones and needles, the scent in the air glorious. As though to tempt the tourist to stop a while to enjoy to the full all that is about him, on many of the bends the road has been widened so that a car can be parked, for it is the ideal place for the picnic lunch or tea as you look down on the forest-covered hills, the silver river lost for a distance behind their beautiful multicoloured branches and high in the background the snow-covered mountain tops, sharply separated by their whiteness from the clear blue of the sky.

The rest house at Kud sits just above the road, and although the furnishings were far from up to hotel standard, food of a kind was to be had there, and so we stopped the night, to awaken next morning to walk out on to the covered verandah and look across to the distant hills, over the mist which still clung to the valley between. Like most of these rest houses and Dak bungalows, which are usually quite old buildings, it has been beautifully sited for tourists but is not comfortable enough to encourage them to linger long. This was to be the last night on which blankets would be required on the bed.

From here down to Udhampur is a distance of twenty-five miles, the road gradually dropping, with many hairpin bends; but still the country clings to its trees, although as the latitude becomes lower, so the sweet-smelling pines and the firs are replaced by others. From among the barren red rocks great bushes grow, and when we were there they were all in bloom, the most fascinating being a mass of pink wax-like flowers, the leaves narrow, long and glossy, and when we stopped we found small clumps of wild strawberries in those parts of the road which held more vegetation. Still the road was with the river.

Most of the little towns we had passed through had consisted of long bazaars, always with many "hotels" which are really restaurants. Here and there on the bend of the road, beneath shady trees and close to a stream or a spring there were the odd tea shops, their sign of trade as always, being rows of cups and saucers and tiny tea pots, for each customer has his own pot; whilst behind them is a great clay stove with a kettle always

2: Gervis T-8 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir AV1

boiling on the top, and usually there are tin biscuit boxes with glass fronts to display the different kinds of cakes. There were always the cloth shops, the shelves sparsely spread, but with the dhursie—or tailor, usually a Sikh—sitting cross-legged on the verandah before his sewing machine, it being quite usual for the purchaser of cloth who comes from some way off in the hills to buy a length and wait for it to be made up into whatever article he or she wants. Then there was always the dry-goods store, most of that which the shopkeeper had to sell being displayed in large, flat baskets, whether it be tea, soap, tobacco, chilli powder, salt, flower, rice or any other commodity; always he had for sale lengths of rope, small fans for brightening up the charcoal cooking fire, and sweepers' brooms, besides oil for lamps and the ghee for cooking. His was a shop essential to every hamlet.

From Udhampur to Jammu is a little over forty miles. By now I began to realize that the lovely Valley of Kashmir was a long way off, for low hills surround the road; these are bleak and as we went further, so the trees and bushes no longer grew. The road winds, with many blind corners, and the rocks change in their colour to an elephant grey; they are smooth, as though soft, and there are signs in plenty of erosion, but the road is wide and the surface good. With little else to think about, my mind went back to that which I had read of this road. In the not very distant past, the route to Srinagar was the private road of the Maharaja; over this he travelled each spring to go to his summer capital, and returned the same way to Jammu, his winter capital, in the late autumn. All but the last Maharaja, who used cars, took weeks to make the journey; each night camp was made, usually at one of the rest houses but not necessarily so, though always near to a spring—a few of those he used are still adorned with the stone carved heads of animals out of the mouths of which cool water was made to flow for His Highness. He did not always move on next morning though; the decision as to when he could continue the journey being arrived at by his pundits, and if they decided that the stars were not propitious, then the Maharaja just stayed put, sometimes for weeks on end, whilst "his Srinagar subjects anxiously awaited His Highness's arrival".

State school badly housed, and a dispensary in a building wholly unsuited to the purpose. The town has a neglected appearance. The streets are badly laid, dirty, and undrained, and there are no attempts at conservancy. Trade is brisk. It is mostly in the hands of Mahājans and Khattrīs. The chief articles of export to British India are grain, *ghī* from the hills and Pūnch, and minor forest products from Kotli, Pūnch, and Rājauri; the chief imports are salt, cloth, tea, and sugar.

Pūnch.—Principal place in the *jāgīr* of the same name, Kashmīr State, situated in 33° 45′ N. and 74° 9′ E., at an elevation of 3,300 feet above sea-level. It lies on sloping ground above the right bank of the Tāwi. Population (1901), 8,215. The town is oblong in shape, and is unwalled, with narrow streets. There are about 750 houses, generally single-storeyed with flat mud roofs. The fort, in which the Rājā resides, stands on a mound about 300 yards from the south-west corner of the town. Pūnch is well supplied with water brought by channels from the neighbouring streams. The climate is hot in the summer, and the rice-fields in the neighbourhood are probably one of the causes of the prevalence of fever. During the five hot months it is the custom to migrate to the hills to the summer camping-ground known as Dhoks. There is a flourishing market and a large trade is done in grain and *ghī*, in spite of the fact that there are no roads in the *jāgīr* fit for cart traffic. A good six-foot road for pack transport has nearly been completed from the town to Uri on the Jhelum, and there is a project for a road to Rāwalpindi, with a suspension bridge over the Jhelum at Lachman Pātan. Other important tracks lead to Gulmarg and Tosh Maidān in Kashmīr, and to Jhelum. The ancient name was Parnotsa, and the place is often mentioned in the chronicles. The Kashmīris always speak of Pūnch as Prunts.

Situation. **Srīnagar.**—Capital of Kashmīr State, situated in 34° 5′ N. and 74° 50′ E., at an elevation of 5,250 feet above sea-level. The city lies along the banks of the Jhelum, with a length of about 3 miles and an average breadth of 1½ miles on either side of the river. Originally houses were confined to the right bank of the river, and the site possesses many advantages, strategical and economic. It is not known when the extension on the left bank took place, but the royal residence was transferred to it in the reign of Ananta, 1028–63. Modern Srīnagar, on the right bank, occupies the same position as the ancient city of king Pravarasena II, who ruled at some period of the sixth century. Kalhana, in his famous chronicle, says that the